

Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency



Summary Program Evaluation 2021-2022

Program Overview

In 2021-2022 Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency provided out-of-school programming for 21 schools (K and L cohorts). The MDE 21st Century Community Learning Center grants targeted high-priority and low-income schools. Students were offered after-school and summer programming for a minimum of four days a week, two and a half hours a day, for 32 weeks during the school-year and six weeks in the summer.

The A2G program served over 574 elementary, middle, and high school students. Direct services were provided to a) improve student academic achievement, b) expose students to socio-emotional programming, and c) engage parents/guardians in a range of supportive services intended to mitigate common barriers to individual and family success.

The effects of the protracted pandemic impacted programming during 2021-2022. In southeast Michigan, COVID-19 exacerbated pre-existing racial disparities in economics, housing, health care and education. Youth and families engaged in A2G programming began the 2021 school year with significant needs and demonstrable achievement lag.

Program Outcomes

- The greatest participation was by 6th grade students (16 percent) and Grades 6-8 represented 44 percent of the total A2G attendance. Grades 9-12 represented 8 percent of the total participating population. Ronald Brown Academy demonstrated the highest number of regularly attending students (>75 hours) over the school year, high school students attended programming the least often.
- Local A2G academic achievement growth goals, crafted prior to the 2021 school year, were challenging to meet. Comparing pre-pandemic to post-pandemic cohorts Strunk, K. et.al. (2023) found that Michigan students' math and ELA achievement growth dropped by 0.20, and 0.03 standard deviations more than expected, respectively, between 2019 and 2022. These drops were larger for Black, Latino, and economically disadvantaged students, as well as students in districts that were at least partially remote in 2021-22. Benchmark assessment results were consistent with sharp drops in 2020-21 followed by a partial recovery and potential stall-out in 2021-22. Participating A2G school achievement results were not inconsistent with published State of Michigan data.

As such, student attendance and retention following the previous year of hybrid and/or strictly online learning became a strong focus for A2G staff as face-to-face learning is best for most students. A2G programming became a strong anchor for student homework assistance and purposeful engagement activities designed to reduce the impact of social isolation experienced by many youth.

- Parent engagement activities were strengthened, with 62% more offerings provided in 2021-2022 than previous years. High touch, one-on-one resource support also increased with parent/guardian meetings held in person and online. Resource navigation was the most requested service (e.g. food, utility assistance, housing) and the second most requested service was best practices for transitioning students back to in-person instruction. As an example, one parent indicated that her son was reluctant to return to face-to-face instruction but felt compelled because of his interest in participating in A2G. Ultimately, the parent stated her son was less resistant to attend school and complete his homework as a result of his participation in the program.

Future Programming

- The addition of the Youth and Family Engagement Specialists at the sites was an essential component for building program capacity. Specifically, the revised staffing structure was critical for addressing the achievement growth challenges and increased parent/guardian needs resulting from the pandemic.
- Through A2G, Wayne Metro is maintaining itself as a dependable community resource for families with school-age children. It is anticipated that parents/guardians will continue to seek support from A2G staff for future needs.
- Programming in 2022-2023 will require additional supportive academic aids to move the needle in areas that suffered the most as a result of the pandemic – Math and ELA.

* Strunk, Katharine O., Bryant G. Hopkins, Tara Kilbride, Scott A. Imberman, and Dongming Yu (2023). *The Path of Student Learning Delay During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from Michigan*, Cambridge, MA: NBER Working Paper No. 31188, 64 p